

St. Valentin, 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2014

**Spirit of cooperation between Parliament, farmers' organisations and business**

## **2<sup>nd</sup> EPP European Congress of Young Farmers sponsored by Case IH and Steyr**

**Clear message: We need our farmers / Future food, feed and fibre supply depends on young farmers of today / European Young Farmers' Prizes 2014 for "best", "most sustainable" and "most innovative" projects provided by Case IH and Steyr**



PRESS RELEASE

Taking place for the second time, the European Young Farmers Congress 2014 – organised by the European People's Party (EPP) in the European Parliament in Brussels - highlighted the role of young farmers for the future supply of food, feed, and fibre, for future life in rural areas, and thus for European societies at large. "We are proud to be involved in this important event", said Matthew Foster, Case IH & Steyr Vice President responsible for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, at his opening speech. "It is an undisputed fact that farmers are facing three completely different but equally significant challenges today: The need to increase world food, feed and fibre production, the need to harvest more but produce with less input - i.e. become more efficient - and the equally pressing need to further reduce environmental side-effects of agriculture to the greatest possible extent.

We need to get the setting right – to enable young farmers to fulfil their challenging tasks. They need – and they deserve – our support", explained Foster.

"Young farmers and their role in modern sustainable agriculture is a key issue", Foster emphasised and his speech. "Industry must be prepared to provide the technical solutions to assist young farmers on their challenging path towards the future. And that is where we come into play. With machinery for precision farming, our sector offers solutions which farmers need to meet the demands of society today and tomorrow. However, we equally need to make politics and society aware of agricultural reality, of factors that may hamper necessary developments. At the same time, we must point out achievements and positive examples – and that is exactly what we had in mind when we decided to

support the Young Farmers Congress 2014 and to reward the best, the most innovative and the most sustainable projects of young farmers”, Foster said.

Among the forward-looking projects, three entries caught particular attention of the jury which consisted of Mr Joseph Daul, President of EPP Group and chairman of the jury, and one representative each from the European Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, the European Committee of Young Farmers, COPA – COGECA, as well as Case IH and Steyr.

The entry submitted by Dániel Bakó, Hungary, was voted most sustainable project and received a prize of 7,500 Euros. Growing White Paprika / Pepper in foil tents and later glass houses has been a Bakó family business since the 1970s. In the beginning, propane / butane were used in addition to low temperature thermal water, the use of which is a peculiarity of the region. When speaking about his personal experiences in this highly energy-efficient and economically successful project, Dániel Bakó explained: “It is a great honour for me personally to receive this prize – but I consider it also an award for all those farmers in Hungary who advocate the use of thermal water in our local agricultural production. This prize is encouraging – and other young farmers should use this encouragement to be innovative, to invest – and to make knowledge about modern farming available to our society.”

Chosen as most innovative project and also rewarded with a prize of 7,500 Euros, the entry submitted by Pedro Gallardo Barrera from Spain focussed on “sowing sunflower early”. The project almost describes a ‘green revolution’ in Andalusia: it allows for higher yields, less irrigation water and less crop protection products to be used, and it enhances wildlife. “When we started with that project about six years ago, we did so by accident”, said Pedro Gallardo. “All our neighbours thought we were crazy when we continued the experiment in the following years. We have changed to early planting on about 200 hectares by now, and many neighbours have started to follow our path. When looking back to the beginning, my recommendation to other young farmers is: Dare to develop your business, dare to make mistakes – and use those mistakes to learn and get better. You will learn, and you will benefit for sure”, Pedro Gallardo Barrera emphasised.

The best project, “Het Eetcafé / The Future of Our Food” had been submitted by Eric Pelleboer from the Netherlands. This entry convinced the jury due to its huge social engagement and momentum and was rewarded with a 10.000 Euro prize. “I am overwhelmed – and I am honoured to receive this prize”, Eric Pelleboer said. “It is great to see that people

appreciate this project so much. For my partners and myself, there is a particular reason for this initiative: There is a wide gap between many consumers and farmers, there is a serious lack of knowledge. It is important, however, that citizens see and understand that their food is produced well and responsibly. It thus is important to foster dialogue, to show what farmers do, and to explain why we do things as we do. Bridging this gap helps to respect and trust each other”, Pelleboer concluded.

“By supporting the 2<sup>nd</sup> EPP European Young Farmers Congress, we clearly illustrate our brands' commitment to agriculture in general and young farmers in particular”, said Foster. “There have been quite some impressive entries, showing what young farmers are willing and able to do. I indeed hope that the messages of this event will be heard loud and clear – and that the necessary steps will be taken to secure their support and thus our future”, Foster concluded.

With the intention to raise awareness and make the whole agricultural sector, governments and society more alert to the needs of young farmers as the leaders and farmers of our future, the Young Farmers Congress 2014 was hosted by four EPP Members of the European Parliament, including Elisabeth Köstinger from Austria, Mariya Gabriel from Bulgaria, Nuno Melo from Portugal and Maria Auxiliadora Correa Zamora from Spain as well as the Portuguese farmers confederation CAP, and the Spanish farmers organisation ASAJA. Case IH and Steyr supported the event as sponsoring partners.

More information is available at [www.caseih.com](http://www.caseih.com).

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Caption:

Matthew Foster, Case IH & Steyr Vice President Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) - Marie Mouton, Case IH & Steyr Brand Communication Manager EMEA - Eric Pelleboer, Winner of the Young Farmers Prize for the Best Project - Tjörven Van de Velde, Case IH & Steyr Marketing Manager Benelux (f.l.t.r.)

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